

# Wrexham

## The Tree and Woodland Strategy

January 2005

Adopted January 2005





### Adoption

The Tree and Woodland Strategy was adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council in January 2005.

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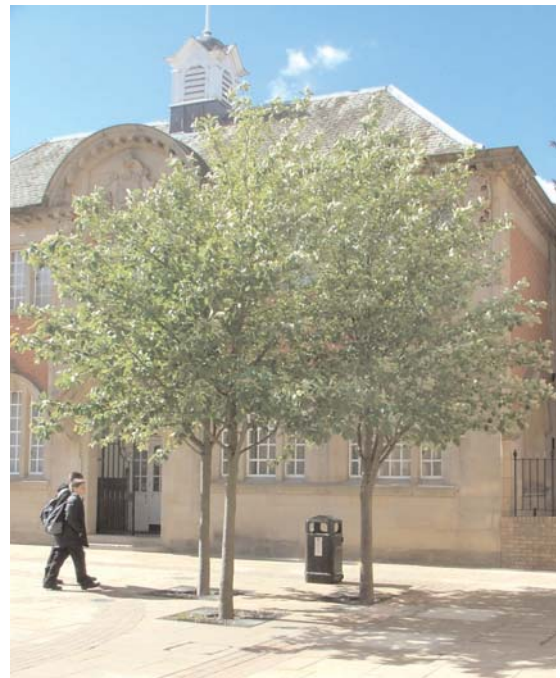


# 1. Purpose of the Strategy

This ten years strategy is designed to create high quality and sustainable local urban and rural landscapes where trees and woodland can:

- maximise social inclusion and community benefits;
- support thriving woodland-based industries; and
- contribute to a better quality environment.

The strategy supports and complements numerous national and local policy guidance, which promote the sustainable regeneration and management of our environment. These are included in Appendix 1.



Plan 2 : Regional Setting



# 2. The Benefits of Trees and Woodlands

Trees and woodlands mask unsightly views, breathe new life into derelict and neglected townscapes improve the image of an area, attracting new development and stimulating inward investment. They also provide a rich habitat for wildlife, opportunities for recreation and leisure pursuits thereby improving quality of life through better health, reduced pollution and greater social integration. The woodland industry in Wales supports some 4,300 full time jobs, generates £61 million of disposable income has an estimated gross output of approximately £400 million per year largely in construction and the manufacture of flooring and furniture, machinery, fencing and fuel wood. It is through utilising the native timber resource that the future of woodland and their contribution to the rural way of life can be assured. The benefits of trees and woodlands include:

## Social Benefits

- Planting and caring for trees through education brings people together, strengthening local communities and increasing the sense of ownership of their surroundings.
- Trees, woodlands and accessible green spaces contribute to high environmental quality standards and healthier lifestyles.

## Economic Benefits

- Trees and woodlands can help stabilise derelict land and return it to beneficial use thereby enhancing land economy.

- Woodland can offer a cost-effective landscape treatment for urban green space and an alternative to other land management prescriptions.
- Trees and woodlands visually soften the urban environment and are a major indirect factor in attracting inward investment.
- Growing investment in the wood-processing sector contributes significantly to economic stability.

## Environmental Benefits

- Each tree is an environmental regulator working 24 hours a day to control air temperature, reduce noise pollution and filter and absorb air pollution.
- Woodlands, forest and individual trees support a wide variety of animals and plants (flora and fauna) thereby maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.
- Each year one mature tree provides a family of 4 with enough oxygen for an entire day whilst an acre of woodland meets the oxygen needs of 18 people and absorbs as much carbon dioxide as a car produces in 26,000 miles.
- Each time we plant trees we help counteract the harmful causes of global warming
- Dense leaf coverage, through interception of rain droplets in the upper and lower tree canopies, reduces soil erosion. Over large sloping areas this can drastically reduce the risk of landslides and flooding.

# 3. Trees and Woodlands in Wrexham County Borough

Trees and woodland are an important part of the culture and natural heritage of the locality adding texture and colour to our urban and rural landscapes, providing places for recreation, and harbouring many rare plants and animals. Today, the locality has a significant and impressive variety of specimen amenity trees, which are complemented by a diversity of ornamental gardens, community and estate park woodlands, species rich hedgerows and orchards. Many local trees and woodlands are descended from the primeval "wildwoods" that once covered most of Wales and contain species such as oak, ash, alder, birch and elm.

Today only around 3% of Wales is still covered by broadleaved woodlands, and probably only half of this is ancient. Although recent changes in policy have restricted the wholesale removal of these woodlands or their replacement with conifers, there are other more subtle threats such as species fragmentation, disease, reduction of soil fertility, stripping of tree bark and soil poaching, and invasion by introduced species and animals. Locally, broadleaved woodlands now only cover 4.2% of the County Borough's land surface. An equivalent area is covered by mixed woodland and imported conifer plantations such as spruce, pine, larch and fir. Furthermore, trees and woodlands make a substantial contribution to Wrexham's local economy.

Today, Wrexham has a strong and vibrant timber processing industry, ranging from the traditional quality furniture makers to the high tech-high volume processors.

Wrexham County Borough Council currently has a large number of important amenity trees and woodland that are integral to the character and setting of the region. These trees give a sense of place to settlements and Wrexham Council recognises this by initiating Tree Preservation Orders. Wrexham Council currently has 300 Tree Preservation Orders that protect individual trees, groups and woodlands.

Significance trees within the region are the yews of St Mary's Church in Overton mentioned as one of the seven wonders of Wales, a 1600 year old Yew at All Saints Church, Gresford and the Pontfadog Oak, Wales's largest sessile oak at 42.4 feet (12.9 meters) in girth. Other trees include many veteran trees at Chirk Castle and surrounding area, and black poplars (Britains rarest native timber tree) can be found along the River Dee floodplain.

# 4. Objectives and Policies

Wrexham also has woodland of high conservation, landscape and commercial values, which occupy the marginal areas of Wrexham.

The following objectives and policies are a combination of land use and management initiatives. These are broadly categorised as social, economic and environmental issues. It is, however, recognised that policies are inter-related and will often impact upon one or more issue.

## 1. Social Objectives

**1.1** Promote educational and community involvement and commitment to the implementation of tree planting schemes and the management of neighbouring woodlands.

**1.2** Encourage tree planting and woodland schemes as cultural assets in socially deprived communities.

**1.3** Promote tree planting and woodland schemes as sustainable resources that encourage active recreation and health benefits.

## Policies

### 2 Education

**2.1** Tree and woodland planting within the grounds of educational establishments will be promoted in order to maximise environmental awareness.

## 3 Social Integration

**3.1** Community involvement in the design, implementation and management of new local landscape projects will be encouraged to increase access to woodlands for all.

## 4 Economic Objectives

**4.1** Encourage and actively support the business sector to generate schemes.

**4.2** Provide woodland industries with effective business support.

**4.3** Develop wood supply chain, product development and marketing activities.

**4.4** Provide support for farm woodlands and the wider rural economy.

**4.5** Foster the development of renewable energy based on wood.

**4.6** Use woodlands to help create a higher quality visitor experience.



## 5 Adding Value

**5.1** The use of locally produced timber and woodland products for use in construction will be supported.

**5.2** The value of effective woodland management will be promoted, through education and training, to all sectors of the industry.



## 6 Environmental Objectives

**6.1** Identify derelict or underused "brownfield" land for tree planting.

**6.1** Promote tree planting to alleviate environmental pollution (air, soil and water).

**6.1** Encourage and support schemes that contribute towards local and national biodiversity objectives

**6.1** Conserve and enhance local urban and rural landscape.

**6.1** Promote best practice in tree and woodland management.

**6.1** Promote the re-use of timber.

**6.1** Increase tree and woodland cover.

## 7 Policies

Planting on and adjacent to employment centres and urban gateways

**7.1** Tree planting in advance of development will be encouraged on all derelict and underused sites.

**7.1** Tree Planting will be promoted on and adjacent to existing industrial and commercial centres and urban gateway sites and linear corridors.

## 8 Renewable Energy

**8.1** The development of renewable energy based on wood and wood products will be promoted.

**8.1** Short rotation coppice for wood fuel production will be supported, subject to adequate environmental and landscape protection for the proposed sites.

## 9 Planning Guidelines

**9.1** All future planting must accord with the provisions of Local Planning Guidance Note 17 'Trees and Development' and Policy EC 4, 'Hedgerows, Trees and Woodland' of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

**9.1** Trees and Woodland of high amenity value will be protected by the imposition of Tree Preservation Orders.



## 10 Landscape and Afforestation

**10.1** The conservation, through traditional management techniques, of veteran and orchard trees and hedgerows will be encouraged.

**10.2** In historic estate parkland, historic gardens and historic landscapes, priority will be given to the management and reinstatement of avenues, parkland trees, orchards and copses. Woodland planting and management that damage such features will not be supported.

## 11 Community Woodland and Support

**11.1** Urban tree management and new planting initiatives will continue to be supported through fund raising and professional advice in accordance with current practices and industry standards.

## 12 Local Provenance

**12.1** Existing broadleaved woodlands (in particular Ancient Woodlands Sites) and their wildlife habitats should be conserved.

**12.2** Native trees of local provenance will be promoted in community woodland planting and afforestation.

## 13 Woodland Health

**13.1** Fly-tipping in, and pollution of, woodlands will be prevented through rigid enforcement.



## 14 Unsuitable Afforestation

**14.1** Afforestation will not be favoured where it detrimentally affects common land, deep peat such as lowland raised bogs and upland blanket bogs, ancient monuments, SSSI's and other land of significant biodiversity value.

**14.2** The conversion of planted ancient woodland sites including the gradual conversion of coniferous woodland to broad-leaved will be encouraged.

**14.2** New planting will only occur where it does not prejudice the nature conservation value of species rich unimproved grassland upland moorland and where it reflects the character and scale of the local landscape.



## 15 Existing Woodlands

**15.1** Surviving pockets of mature woodland and urban fringe broad-leaved woodland will be conserved and actively managed for the benefit of the community.

## 16 Landscape

**16.1** The restoration and conservation of sensitive landscapes in the Dee valley flood plain, through the planting of individual trees or small copses, will be preferred to the establishment of larger woodlands.

# 5. The Next Steps

Adopt this strategy as a Local Planning Guidance Note in order to implement Planning Policy EC4 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. EC4 states: Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.

Monitor success of strategy in order to secure funding for tree and woodland planting schemes.

Produce an action plan with key partners indicating how the objectives of the strategy will be met.

Link strategy with all current and future tree and woodland schemes such as Tree generation, Forest Schools Initiative and North East Wales Orchard Initiative.

A partnership approach will be taken in the delivery of this strategy to ensure effective use of resources and to utilise existing tree planting and maintenance schemes.



# Appendix 1: Strategic Context

## National Guidance

**Sustainable Development Scheme (S.D.S.) - 'Learning to Live Differently'** - National Assembly for Wales (2004-7). The National Assembly has a legal duty to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions. The S.D.S. provides an over-arching framework for all of the Assembly's work and is subject to an annual report. It is focussed on economic, social and environmental priorities, and seeks to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are at the core of the regeneration process.

**Planning Policy Wales** - Welsh Assembly Government (2002) outlines how the planning system, through the regulation of the development and use of land, reconciles the need of development and conservation, including the protection of natural resources.

**Woodlands for Wales** - National Assembly for Wales (2001) is a 50 years vision for forestry and woodland guided by five key principles: sustainability, social inclusion, quality, partnership and integration. Particular emphasis is given to the use of trees and woodland as a social and cultural asset for some of Wales' most disadvantaged areas and communities.

**The UK Forest Standards** - UK Government (1998) describes the Governments approach to sustainable forestry and woodland management.

**Communities First Programme** - National Assembly for Wales (2000). This involves the direct participation of communities in planning and developing the services delivered to that community including a number of deprived local communities.

**Estates Health Building Note 45** - The National Health Service (1992) underlines the growing acceptance of the link between an attractive environment and its therapeutic value to patients.

**Learning to Work Differently: Sustainable Development** - Welsh Development Agency (2000) encourages high standards of design and sustainability in all developments and regeneration projects.

**The Rural Recovery Plan** - North Wales Economic Forum seeks to create a vibrant and sustainable economy, which gives people pride in their communities and motivates them to work and live in the area.

## Local Strategies

**The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (2004)** seeks both to achieve sustainable development to ensure a better quality of life for everyone; and to integrate economic, social and environmental goals. More specifically encouragement is given to the sustainable management of existing and new trees and woodland, including community woodlands.

Wrexham County Borough Council's **Biodiversity Action Plan (2002)** is a partnership of conservation and environmental bodies, landowners, educationalist and commercial interests working together to maintain and enhance local biodiversity.

**Wrexham's Countryside Strategy (2002)** aims to provide a living countryside which combines the need to conserve and enhance the natural and built environments with the provision of local jobs, services and recreational opportunities in a sustainable manner.

**Landscapes Working for Wrexham: The Wrexham Landscape Strategy (1996)** defines existing landscape conditions in the County Borough and develops policies to achieve improvements.

**The Clwyd Indicative Landscape Study (1995)** is a typology of landscape types and appropriate landscape management strategies, now superseded by Wrexham Landmap (2004).



**The Clwyd Indicative Forestry Strategy (1995)** establishes a policy framework to guide forestry and woodland operations and identifies areas where forestry expansion is suitable and unsuitable.

**Wrexham's Strategy for Sustainable Development (2004)** promotes local sustainable development by improving the quality of life through individual actions and by integrating social, economic and environmental issues.

**URBAN II West Wrexham Local Action Plan (date)** is an area-based community led programme designed to tackle the economic, environmental and social regeneration.

**A Regeneration Strategy for Wrexham's Urban Villages** - Wrexham County Borough Council (date) aims to create strong, active and vibrant communities through improvements to the physical environment.

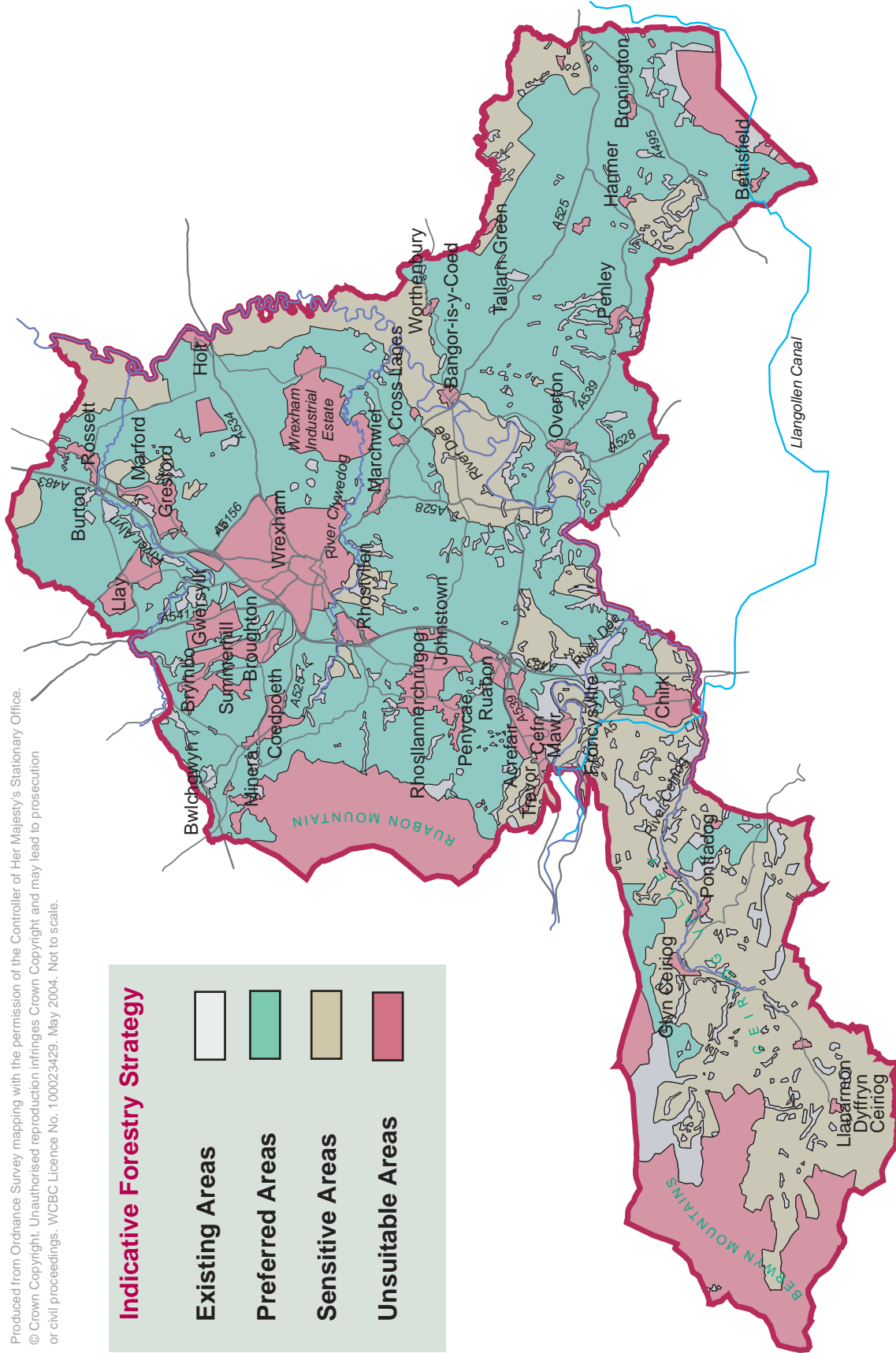
**The LEADER +** programme is a European Union funded community initiative to promote the development of rural areas.

**Wrexham Refreshed Community Strategy (2004-2020)** - aims to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of local communities and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development through a community vision and partnership with other public sector organisations.



Map 2 : Plan Area

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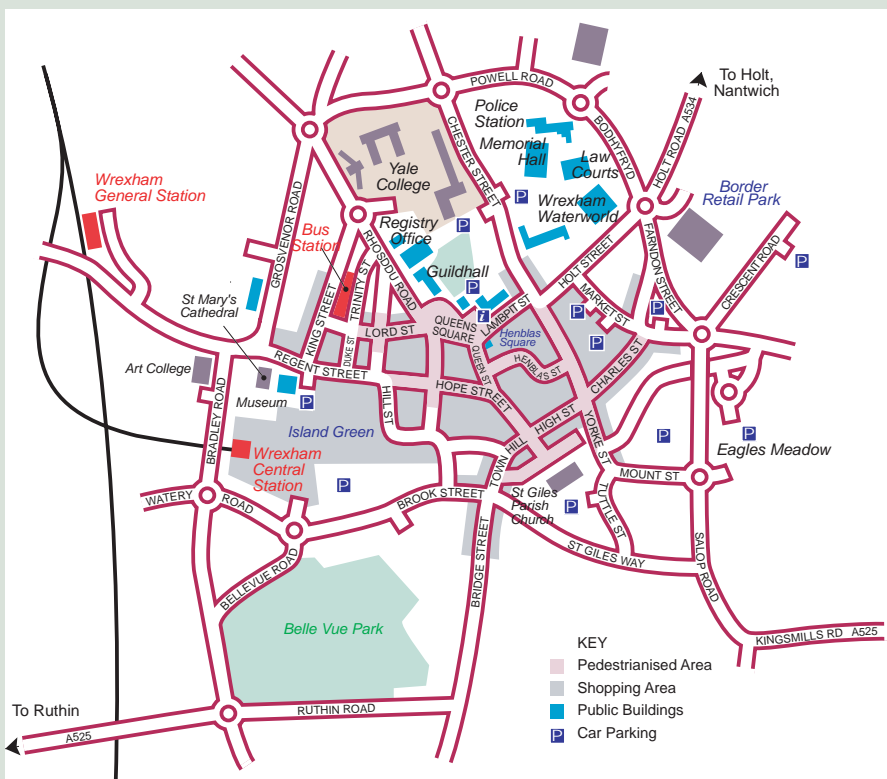
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# Contact Details



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